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to the subscribers, my friend Desor remembered the trick he had played on his amanuensis. A special card had to be inserted in place of the objectionable passage. The conclusion may easily be drawn—four proof-readers had read the article without consciously taking knowledge of its contents.”

I suppose that every author who has published much must have felt disgusted at finding some glaring error in a paper of which he had read the proofs and yet failed to detect. Such failure is not very surprising, however, as attention is concentrated on form and typography. But it is surprising that four men of such learning as Agassiz, Desor, ‘(G.)’ and Vogt should all have passed unnoticed the evident absurdity quoted by Prof. Vogt. Perhaps the fact they did so may reconcile others to their blunders. I offer this balm (which has been of service to me!) for those interested. Yours truly,

THEO. GILL.

WASHINGTON, July 11, 1895.

#### THE GENERIC NAME *ANISONYX* PRE-OCCUPIED.

IN the first number of the new series of *SCIENCE* (Vol. I., No. 1, Jan. 4, 1895, 18–19) I called attention to the fact that the generic name *Anisonyx* of Rafinesque (1817) antedates *Spermophilus* of Cuvier by eight years, and seemed to be the earliest available name for the ground squirrels. Fortunately, however, *Anisonyx* is preoccupied. In a rare work by Latreille entitled *Genera Crustaceorum et Insectorum*, and published in 1807, the name *Anisonyx* was proposed for a genus of Coleoptera, thus antedating Rafinesque’s use of it by ten years.

C. HART MERRIAM.

#### CORRECTION.

IN the review of the Twenty-third Annual Report of the Geological Survey of Minnesota, etc., in *SCIENCE* of July 5, p. 23, first column, near top, the Keewatin rocks are referred to the Upper Algonkian,

of the U. S. Geological Survey, whereas they should have been referred to the *Lower* division.

EUGENE A. SMITH.

#### SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE.

*Les aurores polaires.* By ALFRED ANGOT. Paris, Felix Alcan. 1895. Bibliothèque Scientifique Internationale. 230 pages with an appendix catalogue and many illustrations.

The well known meteorologist of the Bureau Central Météorologique takes occasion to say, in the introductory chapter of this book, that the lack of any volume in French dealing exclusively with the aurora, since the time of Bravais, 1839, was a prime consideration in the issue of this volume. Information concerning the aurora had to be sought in stray notes, miscellanies, etc. Our author attempted a partial remedy by contributing in 1882 to ‘*La lumière électrique*’ a series of ten papers giving a general view of our knowledge of the aurora; and the present volume consists practically of these ten papers expanded and brought up to date. Appearing in 1895, some mention of Lemstrom’s ‘*L’Aurore boreale*’ (1886) and Paulsen’s ‘*Contribution a notre connaissance de l’aurore*’ (1889) might have appropriately been made; and the omission is the more noticeable in that the former work is referred to in the chapter on the physical character of the aurora.

The illustrations are chiefly reproductions of sketches made by French observers in high latitudes; but it must be confessed that sketches made in 1839, 1870 and 1879 seem a trifle antiquated. No mention is made of the fact that the aurora has been photographed. Tromholt made an attempt as early as 1885 to do this. Very fair photographs considering the conditions were obtained in 1892 by Dr. Martin Brendel and Herr O. Baschin at Bossekop.

The form and appearance of auroras, their physical character, frequency, relation to